

IEP RESOURCES

Are you or your teams struggling to make one curriculum for all, balancing IEPs for students with intensive needs between Standards-based, grade-level curriculum and functional focus, and meeting Federal and State guidelines? If so, read on and check out the suggested links to help your teams.

The IEP revision time is here for many in thunderous proportions, and with the inevitable frenzy it creates. This is a very difficult transition for teams with students with intensive needs. It requires comprehensive systems planning, strong and long professional development, ongoing modeling and partnering, and continuous moral support.

Why, you might ask, do we make this shift? While we do not know the long picture of this paradigm shift to one curriculum for all, we do know one thing: we cannot afford to deprive students from access to educational opportunities and the highest of hopes and expectations. As you know, our vision is not new. Since 1997, IDEA and its regulations have intensified attention to access to general education curriculum and participation in district and state wide assessments. While our Vermont focus has slowly shifted, we are here.

Today, students with disabilities are being held increasingly to the same high standards as their general education peers. The small percentage of students who have significant cognitive disabilities also are expected to participate in standards-based system via alternate assessments and IEP goals that reflect the state Standards (Clayton, Burdge, Denham & Kearns, 2005; Courtade-Little & Browder, 2005).

This, however, is not an easy change for teachers, parents, and students. It requires systems-thinking, many new tools for special and general educators alike, and vision-shifting for all constituents, including teachers, administrators, families and community people.

The mantra is, as you know well, coming to us as a basic tenant of IDEA, make the IEP (planning, instruction, and assessment) connect and access “one curriculum for all.” Our students will be the ones, in the end, to benefit from such experiences and learning.

Helpful Links for Your Team:

Teaching Matters: the Link Between Access to the General Education Curriculum and Performance on State Assessments. Warger, Cynthia, The Access Center, Improving Outcomes for All Students K-8, <http://www.k8accesscenter.org/index.php>

Writing Standards Based IEPs; Aligning IEPs to Academic Standards, (Power Point), 2005. Courtade-Little, G. and Browder, D. contact joan.larsen@state.vt.us

Creating Meaningful & Measurable Early Childhood IEP Goals; Guided Practice; (Power Point). Linked System can be used for training and can be downloaded from <http://kskits.org/ta/>, Compiled by Misty Goosen, Ed.S. & David P. Lindeman, Ph.D., April 2003 (updated October 2006), Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities.

These references are several documents I have found VERY HELPFUL in IEP WRITING and understanding the shift in direction and focus. While they are not DOE sources, they are good ones out there. Please follow the links for the full document. Share your good sources too!

Joan Holcombe Larsen Phone: (802) 828-5120 E-mail: joan.larsen@state.vt.us